



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 29, 2008

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**FALCONS FLYING AGAIN THIS WEEKEND  
RE-ENACTMENT OF HISTORIC LOCAL TEAM'S GAME TO HONOUR WORLD'S  
FIRST OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALLISTS IN HOCKEY**

**The Forks, Winnipeg** – Most people don't know their names, most don't know who they were and most don't realize that they won the world's first ever gold medal in Olympic hockey. This weekend, they can get a small taste of who the men of the Falcons, a local Winnipeg team from the early 1900s, really were and how they played hockey.

"This is a really cool story about a bunch of guys who used to come down to the river, strap on some newspapers to their shins, ring a bell and play their hearts out in front of the Legislature," says Paul Jordan, Chief Operating Officer, The Forks. "They weren't recognized for their achievement for a long time, so it's great that we can be a part of telling the story."

In 1920, the Winnipeg Falcons, after defeating University of Toronto Blues at the Allan Cup, represented Canada in ice hockey's official Olympic inauguration in the 1920 Olympic Games in Antwerp, Belgium.

**Where:** On the Assiniboine River, behind the Legislature  
**Date:** Saturday, March 1, 2008  
**Time:** 1:00 pm – 1:30 pm  
**Event:** Re-enactment, two teams of seven players in real 1920s gear and jerseys, playing on the river

"The whole idea for this event came from a local author who had just written a fictional story about the team," says Jordan. "It was such a piece of Winnipeg history and the fact that they played on the river right in our backyard, made it a perfect fit to put on the ice."

Local hockey legends confirmed to play include: Jordy Douglas (Jets/Hartford/Minnesota), Mike Ford (Jets/Europe), Bob Fitchner (Quebec Nordiques), Russ Romaniuk (Jets), Rick Loeb (Europe) and Gerard McDonald (Tulsa Oilers/Europe). As coach Ab McDonald (Jets/Chicago/St.Louis/Montreal – winner of 4 Stanley Cups).

David Square, author of *When Falcons Fly*, will be at the event also this weekend, as the team's coach, Steamer Maxwell.

"I wrote this book because it is time for the Falcons to get some of the glory they are due. After reading *When Falcons Fly*, the CTV Olympic Sports Desk and TSN recently rated the Falcons' Olympic victory as one of the 10 best sports stories of the 20<sup>th</sup> century."

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Books will be available at rink side for \$15 each. After the game, Square will sign copies and take orders for replica jerseys worn by the Falcons at the 1920 Olympics in Antwerp.

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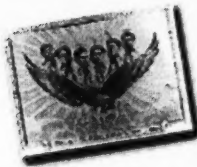
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**About the book**



**When Falcons Fly**

*The story of the world's first Olympic gold hockey team*

A young adult novel - a great read for any age

It's a true rags to riches story: how a group of mostly Icelandic Canadian boys faced racial prejudice and poverty to win the world's first Olympic gold medal in hockey.

In 1920, the Winnipeg Falcons, after defeating University of Toronto Blues at the Allan Cup, represented Canada in ice hockey's official Olympic inauguration in the 1920 Olympic Games in Antwerp, Belgium.

Canada's international hockey dynasty had begun with a group of determined young men who learned their skills on the frozen Assiniboine River and the neighbourhood rinks of Winnipeg.

The upcoming historical novel, *When Falcons Fly*, by Winnipegger David Square, is a vivid account of the Winnipeg Falcons' rise from backyard amateurs to Olympic gold medalists. The book is aimed at a young adult audience, but is an entertaining read for any age.

The captain of the team and the hero of the story, Frank Fredrickson, a youth torn between a love of sports and music, united his ragtag crew of immigrant kids - who wore Eaton's catalogues as shin pads - into a championship team.

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In the novel we meet his lifelong pals Konnie Johannesson, Slim Halderson and Mike Goodman, who was also a Canadian champion speed skater. Their teammates, Bobby Benson, goalie Wally Byron, Alan Woodman and Chris Fridfinnson, all come to life in this compelling read set in early Winnipeg.

The Falcons battled against the Winnipeg establishment who considered the Icelandic community inferior. The Falcon Hockey Club was shunned by the city's senior league and formed the Manitoba Independent League with Kenora, Brandon and Selkirk. The Falcons won the Manitoba League title in 1914-1915, but the team found its ranks depleted as many of its players served overseas in WW I.

After the war, under the guidance of Frank Fredrickson, the team reorganized only to find themselves again excluded from Winnipeg's senior hockey ranks. They organized a new Manitoba Independent League with Selkirk and Brandon and won the Independent League title.

They eliminated the Fort William Maple Leafs in the Allan Cup semi-final en route to winning the championship in Toronto, where they defeated the favored University of Toronto Blues.

As Allan Cup champions, the Falcons were chosen to represent Canada at the Antwerp Games of 1920, where, for the first time, hockey had been declared an official Olympic sport. The team won a close-fought game against the strong American team and easily defeated the Swedes to capture the gold medal.

On their return to Canada, the Falcons were cheered at civic receptions in Montreal and Toronto. In Winnipeg, the team was feted with a parade as a jubilant crowd of thousands, celebrating a half-day civic holiday, came out to cheer their heroes.

Players such as Frank Fredrickson, Slim Halderson and Bobby Benson went on to play in the NHL and the Falcons remained a part of the Winnipeg sporting scene until WW II.

Honored at the 2002 Olympic Games in Salt Lake City, the 2004 World Cup of Hockey, and the 2005 World Juniors, the Winnipeg Falcons remain one of the greatest hockey teams in the history of Canadian sport.

The Falcons were inducted into the Manitoba Sports Hall of Fame and Museum in 1980 and the Canadian Olympic Hall of Fame in 2006. Fredrickson was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1958, the British Columbia Sports Hall of Fame and Museum in 1983 and as coach of the UBC Thunderbirds into the UBC Sports Hall of Fame in 2000.

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**About the author**

David Square grew up in Winnipeg where he played shinny on outdoor rinks at River Heights Community Centre. He graduated from the University of Manitoba with a degree in English.

*When Falcons Fly* is Square's fourth book. He is the author of *The Veneering Book*, *The Manitoba Medical Service Foundation: 35 Years of Promoting Health Care Research in Manitoba*, and the e-book, *Hell's Elongated Bells*.

Square has been a full time freelancer for 12 years writing for publications such as Maclean's, Winnipeg Free Press, Canadian Medical Association Journal, Medical Post, Harrowsmith, Fine WoodWorking and others.

In 1976, he and his wife Penny completed a log house near Tyndall, Manitoba where they live today. Their daughter Bryn began figure skating on a backyard rink.